



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant(s): GAGNE Examiner: ARYANPOUR, MITRA
Serial No.: 10/681,628 Art Unit: 3711
Filed: 10/08/2003 Dkt. No.: IMA-0021-KWIKHANDS

Title: HOCKEY STICK HANDLING TRAINING KIT

Commissioner of
Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

AFFIDAVIT UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.131

I, Ronald C. Gagne, hereby swear and state that:

1. I am the sole inventor of the subject matter set forth in the above referenced patent application.
2. I am the CEO of the company called KwiK-Hands™ Inc., a Massachusetts corporation. The business KwiK-Hands™ Inc. is physically located in Walpole Massachusetts and has a web presence at the domain name www.kwikhands.com.
3. The business, KwiK-Hands™ Inc. assembles and sells hockey stick handling training kits, individual training balls, training practice mats and hockey stick handling training instructional materials. The products sold by KwiK-Hands™ Inc. are designed to teach and reinforce a desired hockey stick handling motion. In particular, the desired hockey stick handling motion is called a "wrist roll."
4. The "wrist roll" is described as follows. Generally a hockey player grips a hockey stick shaft at its upper end with a top hand and grips the hockey stick shaft at or near its mid-point with a bottom hand. The "wrist roll" consists of the player rolling the wrist of the top hand to apply a torque to the upper end of the stick shaft while the bottom hand merely steadies the middle of the stick shaft.
5. Generally KwiK-Hands™ Inc. sells a preferred training kit, detailed below. Use of the preferred training kit in accordance with the instructional materials is called the "System".
6. I began testing and evaluating the system in March 2003 and I began selling versions of the System during October 2003.

7. I was motivated to develop the System as a way to teach my own two sons how to stick handle using the “wrist roll.”

8. Prior to making my invention, I had seen others using a single weighted ball for stick handling practice. At that time, it was my understanding that the weighted ball served to strengthen the wrists and improve the wrist shot. At that time, I could not find any products being sold to hockey players for stick handling training, not even a single weighted ball. I decided to purchase a single weighted ball for my sons to practice with but I could not find a supplier that serviced the hockey market. So I attempted to purchase a single size steel ball weighing 2 pounds or more from a ball bearing supplier. The single ball would be used to practice the wrist roll. When I contacted the ball bearing supplier they insisted that I buy more than one ball bearing. Instead of ordering several balls of the same diameter and weight, I decided to order several balls of different diameters and weights. My plan was to have my sons try each ball and to select a single ball that was most suitable for teaching and reinforcing the wrist roll. My initial order was for four balls each having a different weight and a different diameter.

9. Upon testing the different diameter and different weight balls I made an unexpected discovery. Specifically, I discovered quite accidentally that by stick handling each ball starting with the heaviest largest diameter ball first and progressing to the lightest, smallest diameter ball last, I was able to reinforce the wrist roll motion with the heavier balls and then increase speed and strength, while still using the wrist roll, as I progressed to the lightest ball. What I found is that because heavy balls are difficult to slide over a practice surface it is easier for a user to stick handle the heaviest balls by rolling them; and rolling the heavier balls is most readily accomplished by applying the wrist roll motion. Accordingly, the heaviest ball forces the user to roll his or her wrists since it requires significantly more force to slide heavy ball over the practice surface and especially if the practice surface has a high friction coefficient as compared to ice or a smooth hard conventional floor surface. I also noticed that when stick handling a larger diameter ball, e.g. 3.0 inches, it is possible to fit the hockey stick blade under the ball and generate more leverage for initially rolling the ball. This allows a user to begin the wrist roll motion. Conversely, the hockey stick blade does not fit under the smallest diameter ball, e.g. 1.5 inches and there is less tendency for an inexperienced user to use the wrist roll.

10. It is noted that the training sequence used by the system is exactly the opposite sequence used in conventional weight training. Specifically conventional weight training progresses from light weights to heavy weight as the user develops strength. I have tried training programs that start with the lightest ball first and progressing to the heaviest ball, but I found that this method of training is not as effective for teaching the wrist roll. More specifically the recommended training program starts with the heaviest largest diameter ball first to build the mechanics of the wrist roll motion and then progresses to lighter, smaller diameter balls to build strength and speed.

11. I tried the training sequence on different practice surfaces. I quickly learned that smooth hard convention floors allow the training balls, and especially the lightest smallest diameter balls to slide instead of roll. Sliding allows a user to stick handle without using the wrist roll motion.

All of our evaluations suggest that low friction non-compliant practice surfaces such as concrete, wood or ice will not produce the desired results. In early evaluations, I learned that most carpeting prevented sliding, in part, because it had an increased friction coefficient as compared to smooth surfaces, but also because it is compliant and actually indents to contact a ball over more surface area. This helps to prevent sliding and increases the roll resistance which forces a user to apply a high rolling force with the wrist. Finally I experimented with different mat materials. Ultimately I found that different mat materials offer different rolling resistances to the balls and that the proper rolling resistance is very important. Too much or too little resistance and both motion and strength development will be inhibited.

12. At the time when the present invention was made, I was not aware of the existence of a hockey stick handling training kit designed to teach and reinforce the wrists roll motion. At the time when the present invention was made, I was not aware of the existence of a hockey stick handling training kit that included sets of different weight and different diameter balls. At the time when the present invention was made I was aware that wooden, so-called Swedish training balls, were used for hockey stick handling training and included an example wood ball in TABLE 1 of the invention disclosure. However, to my knowledge, wooden Swedish training balls weigh less than a regulation hockey puck (1.75 ounces vs 6 ounces) and are generally about 1.75 inches in diameter.

13. As of the date of this affidavit, the preferred training kit sold by KwiK-Hands™ Inc. includes four different size diameter and different weight steel balls, a pair of 2 foot square inter locking practice mats, a set of three different size and weight wooden balls, and instructional materials. In addition, the preferred kit includes an extra duplicate of one of the steel balls for the users' hockey bag. The items included in the preferred training kit are listed below. Generally use of the preferred training kit according to the instructional material is referred to as the "System".

Item (number included)	MATERIAL	WEIGHT Ounces (Pounds)	WEIGHT (Grams)	DIAMETER (Inches)	DIAMETER (Millimeters)
Ball A (1)	STEEL	64 (4)	1814	3.0	76.2
Ball B (1)	STEEL	38 (2.4)	1077	2.5	63.5
Ball C (1)	STEEL	19 (1.2)	539	2.0	50.8
Ball D (2)	STEEL	8 (0.5)	227	1.5	38.1
Ball E (1)	WOOD	1.6 (0.1)	46	2.0	50.8
Ball G (1)	WOOD	0.8 (0.05)	21	1.5	38.1
Ball H (1)	WOOD	0.4 (0.03)	10	1.3	31.7
Practice Mat (2)*					
Instructional DVD					
Instructional Booklet					

* Each Practice mat has dimensions of 2 by 2 ft by ½ inch thick. Each mat includes interlocking edges to form a 4 ft by 2 ft practice surface. The practice mat material is closed

cell urethane foam. The practice mat material includes a top practice surface and a bottom practice surface. The top practice surface is coated with a smooth finish layer. The bottom practice surface is uncoated and slightly rougher than the top practice surface. Mat materials, sizes and finishes may vary but the roll resistance is substantially similar. The instructional material suggests that highly skilled stick handlers can use the uncoated bottom practice surface to train on in order to further increase their level of stick handling skills. Proper resistance is very important. Too much or too little resistance and both motion and strength development will be inhibited. Using a low resistance surface such as concrete, wood or ice will not produce the desired results.

** The specified weight and diameter of each ball listed varies slightly from lot to lot.

14. Since introducing the "System" in October 2003, I kept records of written feedback that I have received about the System. The following quotes relate to the performance of the System.

Quote from Bill Driscoll Head Coach of the North American Hockey Academy Stowe VT

"At the North American Hockey Academy we place an extraordinary emphasis on 'preparing to compete'. In addition to our on ice practices and individual skill sessions, we believe responsibility for additional skill development rests with each athlete. That requires off ice skill work and the KwiK-Hands™ system is the core of that program. We've had great success using the KwiK-Hands™ system to both teach proper stick handling and also to refine and bring that skill far beyond many athletes' initial abilities when they arrive at our program or camps. It's not uncommon to have a player come back to the bench in a game and say 'I have no idea where that move came from...' Clearly, it came from the time they devoted to the KwiK-Hands™—it improves skill and as importantly confidence. We carry the off ice work with the KwiK-Hands™ system into our on ice skill development practices as well—stick handling, shooting and passing all improve dramatically. It's effect on an athlete's skill development is unmatched."

Bill Driscolls' bio listed on the web page for the North American Hockey Academy as of the date of this affidavit:

Our Director of Hockey, Bill Driscoll, has been involved in hockey since graduating from Colby College. He is a USA Hockey certified Master Level coach, and has coached at high levels including USA Hockey Regional and Select Festivals as well as USA Hockey National Development Camps and Festivals; alumni of his teams are on rosters of DI and III college teams and the National Teams in the U.S., Canada, and Australia, as well as NHL, AHL, Major Junior and top junior teams. He is co-founder of the Foundation for Hockey Development, recognized and acclaimed internationally for its innovative methods of player development. These methods are the cornerstone of his approach to developing players at the Academy, and one of the attributes that define the program.

15. The first conversation that I had with Mr. Driscoll was when he called me to ask about the KwiK-Hands™ product. He told me that a hockey coach and the father of one of our early testers had described the system and its results to him. I sent Mr. Driscoll the KwiK-Hands™ product to evaluate. Prior to the time that it was made, I did not discuss the content of the above listed endorsement with Mr. Driscoll.

Quote from Dr. Clint Steele founder of Better Hockey.com, Top Dog Athlete.com and Better Hockey Magazine

"Over the last several years I have had the chance to work with hockey players from all over the world from amateur-NHL players. As a strength coach to these players I cannot stress enough the need for off-ice training in terms of specific hockey skills. Up until now I have not found a "good" off-ice training program designed to teach good hands...until now. The KwiK-Hands™ Stick handling System is unbelievable when it comes to teaching proper stick handling technique. Many can tell you how to stickhandle and even show you how to stickhandle but I have NEVER seen a program that actually teaches you. The results I have seen with my players have been incredible. This is progress not only in the youth players but even in the professional ranks. I highly recommend this product for anyone who wants to handle the puck better!"

Dr. Clint Steele DC, CSCS bio listed on the web page www.betterhockey.com as of the date of this affidavit:

A leader in the area of strength and conditioning, USA Hockey Coach Master Level, Author of dozens of better hockey related articles read worldwide, founder of Better Hockey.com, founder of Top Dog Athlete.com, founder of Better Hockey Magazine. Trainer to hundreds of hockey players from all over the world from mites to NHL level players. Strength and Conditioning coach for the Lewiston Maineiacs of the QMJHL.

16. I called Dr. Steele because of his background and qualifications and asked him to test the KwiK-Hands™ product. After he tested the product he wrote the above listed endorsement. Prior to the time that it was made, I did not discuss the content of the above listed endorsement with Dr. Steele.

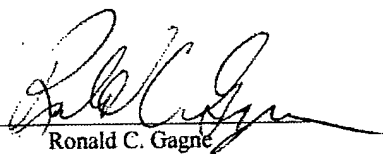
17. The below listed table shows the number of KwiK-Hands™ kits that were sold per year since October 2003.

Year	Systems Sold	Advertising Spending
2003 (Oct-Dec)	46	1,485
2004	287	9,446
2005	409	17,751
2006	309	13,684

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true, and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further, that these statements are made with the knowledge that willful false statements, and the like so made, are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under section 1001, Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.

Date: January 30, 2007 _____
Ronald C. Gagne

Date: January 30, 2007



Ronald C. Gagne